

**AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**  
**February 10, 2011**  
**Bangs Community Center: Lower Meeting Room**

**Members Present:** Daniel Clapp, Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Rosemary Kofler, Barbara Sutherland, Juana Trujillo, Jack Wollensak

**Absent:** Kathy Koplow, Mary Jane Laus

**Select Board Liaison:** Stephanie O'Keeffe

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant)

**Guests:** John Musante, Town Manager, John Lutz (HVES Director), Ron Bohonowicz (Facilities Director), Doris Holden (Treasurer of the Friends of the Amherst Senior Center), Joan Swift, Irene Barrelet, Scott Merzbach (Gazette Reporter), Alan Root

**Welcome:** Dan Clapp, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The minutes of the December 9, 2010 meeting were approved and accepted.

**Friends' Treasurer Report:**

**Doris** provided a handout showing \$11,934.79 in the checking account and \$80,388.12 in the investment account, plus a CD worth \$10,000.

Karen stated that since July, 2010 the Friends has received \$10,149.70 of which \$7394 came in just since the solicitation letter went out in the November newsletter.

The Treasurer's report was approved and accepted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Budget:**

**John Musante** expressed gratitude for the support of the Friends, stating their \$4000 in aid was critical to the new budget of January 14, which is level-funded. The Governor recently proposed a smaller cut to state aid than previously assumed. If those additional funds are realized, John has a short list of items he would like to restore. Ideally then, the \$4000 of the Friends aid would not be needed to support the budget. But the Senate and House still need to scrutinize the Governor's budget. The House version of the budget will come out the middle of March.

**Highland Valley Elder Services:**

**John Lutz** explained that HVES has two designations from the State and the Federal government. One is that HVES is an Area Agency on Aging (AAA). For the State, HVES is designated as an Aging Services Access Point (ASAP). HVES is a conduit for services in 24 towns in western Mass. of which 16 are 'hill towns'. Everyone in the U.S. lives within an ASAP. There are a total of 27 ASAPs in the Mass. Ninety percent of HVES operating money comes from the state through the feds.

**HVES is dedicated to preserving and protecting elders in their homes or in the location of their choosing.** Their programs include:

1. Meals on Wheels (MOW), funded by federal dollars from the Older Americans Act, feeds nutritionally balanced meals to about 1000 people every day in the 24 towns – either home delivered or at congregate sites.
2. Home Care Program, funded by the state. People receive care in their home up to a certain level per month to help them maintain residence in their home. Currently there are about 700 people on the home care program. There is an eligibility criteria and a sliding scale co-pay. The state allows \$266.62 per month per person, half of which is for meals, cutting into personal care time. At times it is necessary to put people on a wait list and prioritize who gets care.
3. Protective Services – for elders involved in physical or emotional abuse, financial exploitation, or medical, caregiver or self neglect. HVES typically gets 2 or 3 reports a day, which need follow up. Each case

manager can handle a caseload of 20 cases at a time. They investigate the situation and determine the resolution.

4. Ombudsman Program – Fourteen volunteers (managed by one staff person) advocate for nursing home residents and make sure they get the services and medical care they are due. They follow up on complaints. HVES oversees 14 nursing homes.

5. Clinical Eligibility and Assessment - Nurses assess whether elders are able to come out of nursing homes. Having an elder at home is more economical than having them in an institution, although sometimes nursing homes are the only and best alternative.

6. Information and Referral. Anyone can call HVES and ask for help. One of three staff members will assess the problem and locate services to fill the need. There is a Hot Line at which people can call 24/7.

One of the biggest challenges for HVES is managing the reduction in revenues and managing costs. The biggest areas of concern are in the nutrition program and the home care program. Expenses are greater than the money available.

**Alan Root** asked about the possibility of having ethnic meals available.

**John** said that since all meals are prepared at the Walter Salvo House and not catered and because of the scale that becomes difficult. Our service area is not very ethnically diverse compared to many areas in MA.

### **Wisdom Works Job Training Program:**

**Nancy** provided a handout explaining a new program. Older workers are staying out of the work force longer than younger adults, therefore The Dept. of Elder Affairs developed *Wisdom Works Job Training* to help adults learn the new and essential skills required for seeking employment in today's market place.

Nancy needs two or more people to go to the training March 4 from 9-2:00 to learn about how the program will function and to get it started in Amherst.

## **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

### **Friends Update/Follies:**

**Doris** reported that the Friends are working toward the *Second Annual Amherst Follies*, which will be held on May 1, 2011. There is the possibility of a pasta supper several weeks before the event to raise money, although overhead costs have already been raised. We have a line up of performers, the ARHS auditorium has a curtain in place and we are beginning to solicit ads for the program. The *First Annual Amherst Follies* went very well last year.

### **Bangs Plaza Update:**

**Ron Bohonowicz** shared the diagram of the plan as approved by the Planning Board on January 5. Bids will go out at the end of February. Ron anticipates starting the project in April. The entrance to Bangs will have the proper grade sidewalk, meeting ADA requirements. For the walkway along the road and facing Rao's there will be a downward slope preceding the flat loading area for the van, then an upward slope. Rails will border that area. The walkways will be sand-color paved concrete. The plaza itself will be brick pavers to allow water to seep through to the plantings. There will be two steps onto the patio from the walkway leading to Ann Whalen. If money is available, there will be a round stone planter in the center of the patio surrounded by a circular bench. Regular benches are part of the plan. Three trees will be removed. Plantings will be defined after consultation with the Tree Warden. There will be protections in the planting areas to prevent people from walking through them. The wall around the plaza will be constructed in such a way as to prevent skateboarding. John Musante has been very supportive of the project.

## **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

### **Parking Sub-Committee:**

**Joel** referred to handouts on the utilization of parking in Amherst as based on a 2008 survey and types of senior parking in other towns in MA. Alan Root is concentrating on "Eligibility Rules" for senior parking permits and the status of the 10-12 parking spaces now available off of Kellogg Avenue. Joel is looking into previous studies of parking in Amherst and the overlap of parking needs of seniors and the disabled.

Jack is focusing on senior parking in other towns. There are several successful programs in the country, of three types: 1) spaces adjacent to the senior center with spaces for seniors 2) senior parking anywhere in

town at any meter 3) senior parking is restricted to municipal lots. Age is usually 55-65 and the permit is usually for 1-2 years. One of these programs could be a model for Amherst. The sub-committee will study things further and come up with a recommendation.

There is a Disability Access Advisory Committee (DAAC). Members Joan Swift and Irene Barrelet spoke. They have studied parking for the disabled. Meetings used to take place at Bangs but because of inadequate handicap parking the meetings are now held at the Stavros Center. Handicap parking at the Jones Library is also inadequate and being studied. Kendrick Park will also need to have handicap access. Irene has suggested to the police increasing the fine for parking illegally in a handicap zone from \$200 to \$300.

Nancy expressed concern about parking in the handicap space at the South entrance to Bangs. It is susceptible to black ice. Also snow slides off the roof in large masses from the roof onto that area. She advised us to warn others about that hazard and will contact maintenance about fixing that problem.

**Senior Health Advisory Group (SHAG):** No report. The meeting was cancelled due to snow.

**Highland Valley Elder Services:**

**Joan** reported that the last meeting focused on a chronic care and management program, called "Options Counseling", which would meet people in their homes.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

**Maura** has a list of 7 or 8 elders who would like to have a Friendly Visitor.

Maura has not had requests for assistance with utilities.

She had a request to use the emergency funds for a woman with a hoarding problem.

Chris Overtree of UMass Psychological Services, has started a program to assist hoarders and offer counseling.

Maura has been talking with Bob Schmid, a carpenter, who is willing to do safety assessments of elders' homes, to enable elders to live in their homes longer – safely.

**Nancy** referred us to a handout about the Formula Grant. The Grant pays almost half of Karen's salary. In the year 2000, Amherst had 2982 people 60 and over. For each of those people the grant paid us \$5.43. Each year that amount has gone up, currently granting \$7.00 per elder. In FY10 Amherst received \$20,874 based on the 2000 Census of residents 60+ of 2982 elders. The Governor is proposing to level-fund the state budget in this line item. The problem is we expect there will be a tremendous increase in the number of elders when the census comes out later this month, which means that sum of money will have to be further divided, giving between only \$5.50 and \$5.75 per elder. There may be even more seniors than the census shows because many elders don't list their age or don't even fill out the census. Nancy urged us to ask our legislators to continue supporting elders at the \$7.00 per elder level with the Formula Grant.

Nancy reminded us that the 2010 survey result yielded the need for a Fitness Room and for an Adult Social Day. Both need space. The Fitness Center could go into the Lower Meeting Room or the Glass Room perhaps. Nancy will talk with LSSE Director Linda Chalfant about using the Glass Room. She asked for a sub-committee from the COA to move ahead with the project.

The COA meeting adjourned at 10:55 AM.

**The next meeting of the COA will be held on March 10, 2011 at 9:00 AM at the Bangs Community Center.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary

The approved minutes of the December 9, 2010 meeting were delivered to the Select Board Office to be filed.

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**Document List**

The following documents were made available to all members of the COA during the meeting. They are available for review at the Amherst Senior Center, 70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst, MA.

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Minutes of December 9, 2010 Meeting
3. Friends of the Amherst Senior Center Treasurer's Report
4. HVES Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
5. HVES Building Caring Communities for Quality Long Living
6. Wisdom Works Job Search Skill Training Program
7. Plan for Bangs Plaza (approved by Planning Board on January 5, 2011)
8. Parking Survey Results
9. Department of Elder Affairs Formula Grants based on Census
10. Senior Health Services Log by Lisa White for December 2010